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Fenced Cow

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you right all the time?" Val felt her throat tighten as she continued, "Because if you're always right, Brad, somebody's wrong. I'm tired of being that somebody."

"Oh, don't over-dramatize, Val. You do these things just to spite me, don't you? Is it too much to ask that you wear a Goddam seat belt? Statistics are obvious on this — anybody with any sense at all buckles up

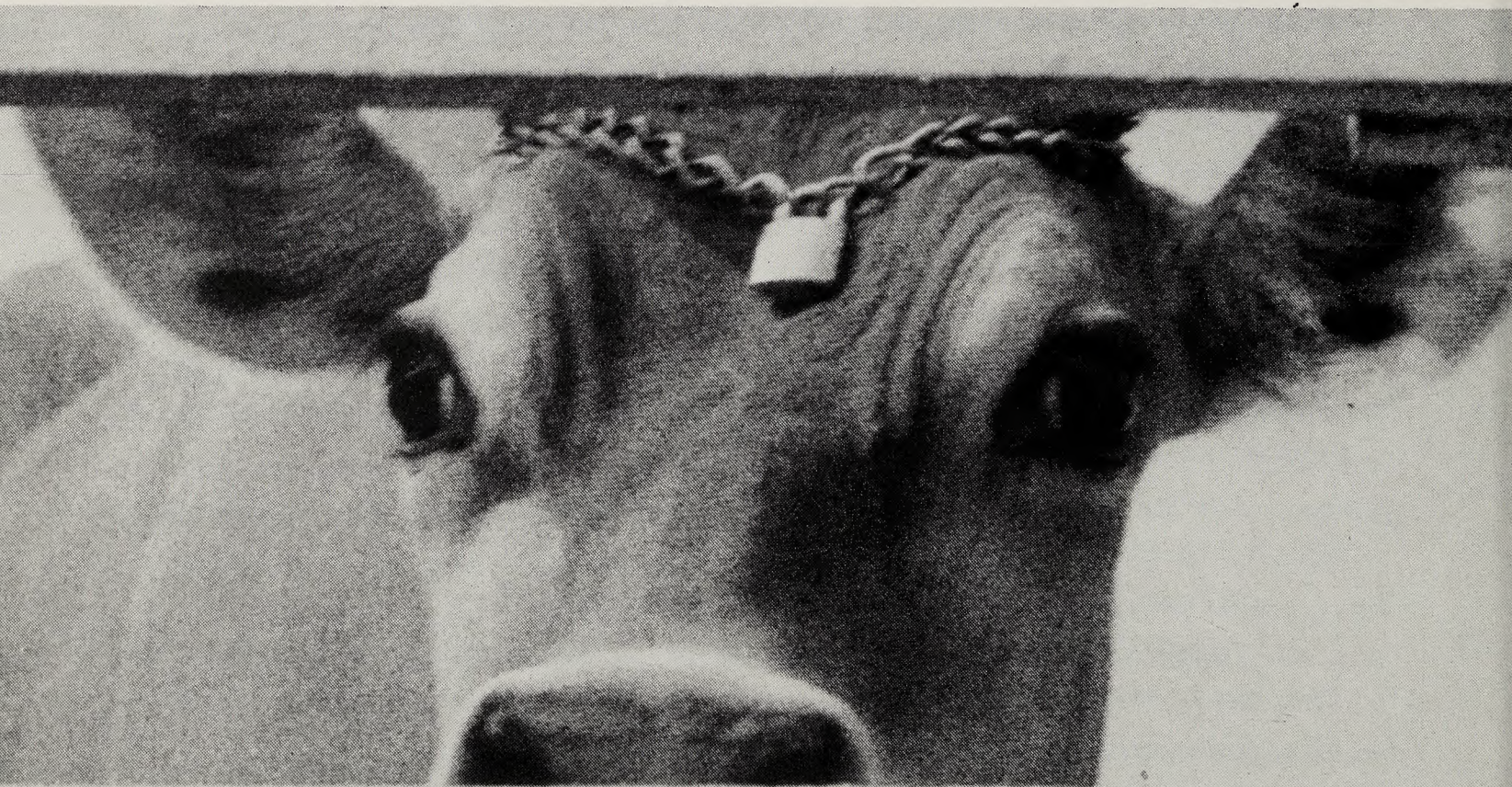
"Brad, it's my life."

"No, Val, it isn't. You're *my* wife — *their* mother. How can you be so irresponsible? We need you."

"I'm sorry, you're right," Val sighed. "I just don't think. Let's go now."

He felt for the key, watched her snap the belt, started the motor, and then looked both ways before pulling back into traffic.

The kids felt for their headphones. Brad fixed his eyes on the road. Val wondered what had just happened. She was confused and shaky. But he had said he needed her. He was a good husband. Not many men cared as much as he did. She leaned her head against the headrest and closed her eyes But what did a man like that, who knew so much, need *her* for? And, under the cover of darkness, she released the belt, swallowed her gum, and slept.



Frank V. Slepicka